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ABSTRACT

The Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI) was conducted in Washington, D.C. from fiscal year 1984 through fiscal year 1986 to relieve overcrowded prison conditions by reducing the recidivism rate. Objectives of the project included hiring additional prison staff to provide security and increase prisoner processing, expanding the education program, and developing classroom and vocational facilities to provide prisoners with basic life skills and a trade that they could use upon release. The project was evaluated by the General Accounting Office (GAO) through interviews with officials involved in the beginning of CJI and examination of files and documents of the program. The study showed that implementation of the CJI program was complicated and delayed because Congress appropriated more than $22 million for the project leaving little time for planning and organizing, whereas the District had originally planned for only $750,000 to develop a basic literacy program for prisoners. The study also found that the CJI spent increasing portions of its operating funds on education during the 3 years of the project. However, significant data accuracy problems restricted GAO's ability to analyze and draw conclusions about the impact of CJI, or to determine whether the program was successful in placing program participants in training-related jobs after release. Recommendations were made for developing and implementing a better reporting system so that program effectiveness could be determined. (KC)

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United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to Congressional Requesters

D.C. GOVERNMENT

Noneducation Factors Hindered Criminal Justice Initiative

GGD-95-57

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division

B-233867

June 27, 1990

The Honorable Brock Adams
Chairman, Subcommittee on the District
of Columbia
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Thomas Harkin
United States Senate

The Honorable Arlen Specter
United States Senate

During October 1983, Congress funded a special prison initiative for the District of Columbia commonly referred to as the Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI). Congress' intention was to expand the academic and vocational education training programs in the District's overcrowded correctional institutions. Congress also envisioned that CJI would serve as a model education program for the Nation's correctional community.

Two former Subcommittee Chairmen, Thomas Harkin and Arlen Specter, asked for information on three questions relating to the planning and operation of CJI:

- What program planning challenges did the District face in originally organizing the CJI program?
- For what purposes were CJI operating funds spent?
- How many inmates obtained a job related to the CJI training received?

Background

The District of Columbia's Department of Corrections (DOC) is currently responsible for housing about 12,000 men and women sentenced by the courts and for preparing them to reenter society. To fulfill this role, DOC operates a variety of correctional facilities and contracts for some correctional services. DOC operates a detention facility in the District of Columbia, where it holds about 1,700 individuals until their cases are heard in court. After sentencing, inmates are housed at the DOC-operated institution in Lorton, Virginia; in state and local correctional facilities; at a federal facility; or at halfway houses in the District. The District contracts with state and local correctional facilities to house its inmates in order to reduce overcrowding at its Lorton facility. At the time of our

review, DOC estimated that its inmate population exceeded its physical plant capacity by 23 percent.

Congress recognized that the District faced a potentially dangerous prison crowding situation and that one reason was the high incidence of recidivism among D.C. offenders (estimated at 52 percent). Therefore, in fiscal year 1984 Congress provided the District with funds for an initiative to attempt to relieve the crowded conditions and break the cycle of recidivism. This effort was known as the Criminal Justice Emergency Initiative, later known as CJI. From fiscal year 1984 through fiscal year 1986, $41 million in federal funds were provided to the District for CJI. The objectives of CJI were to

- hire additional prison staff to provide security and to process the ever-increasing resident population more effectively;
- support expansion of the education program by hiring additional instructors and support staff and by purchasing equipment; and
- build, renovate, and equip classroom and vocational facilities.

The objective of the education portion of CJI was to provide the inmates with basic life skills and a trade that they could use upon release. This objective was to be accomplished by expanding the academic and vocational training programs available to inmates at the District's correctional institutions.

Federal funding for CJI ended in fiscal year 1986. Since then the District has used its own funds to continue these educational programs.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

In order to answer the three questions raised concerning the planning and operation of CJI, we interviewed DOC officials who were involved with, or had knowledge of, its initial organization. We also reviewed DOC files and records on early CJI program planning and implementation. However, these files were incomplete, limiting our ability to pursue all aspects of each question. For example, only limited program planning documentation was available. Thus, we could not determine how the concerns of facility managers and security staffs were addressed by the education staff, a problem noted by several DOC officials. We used the computerized files of DOC's management information system to obtain job placement information for the period from October 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989. Prior to October 1986, DOC did not maintain job placement data on a departmentwide basis. The data identified (1) the number of job placements, (2) job titles, (3) hourly salaries, and (4) the number of jobs

that were related to the CJI training received while incarcerated. However, during our analysis of the DOC records, we became aware of significant data accuracy problems that restricted our ability to analyze and draw conclusions about the impact of CJI. These problems are discussed in detail in appendix III.

Our work was done between August 1988 and October 1989 and in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Results

The following responses to the questions were based on the best information available at the time of our review:

- The District faced formidable challenges in initially planning and organizing the CJI program. The District originally planned for a $750,000 appropriation to develop a basic literacy program for prisoners. However, the planning figure was later increased to $8 million when a congressional representative told the District that Congress was considering a larger appropriation. About 3 months from the time the District was first contacted by Congress, Congress appropriated $22.3 million. Thus, DOC had only about 3 months to plan and organize the CJI effort, and Congress immediately pressed for results. In response, DOC officials reorganized the correctional education program in an attempt to expedite the planning and implementation of the program. However, problems with the way this management effort was carried out actually delayed program implementation. (See app. I.)
- Of the $41 million total CJI federal appropriation provided between fiscal years 1984 and 1986, $27.3 million was for operating expenses and $13.7 million was for capital projects. Over 50 percent of the operating funds were used to support the education portion of CJI. During each succeeding fiscal year in which federal CJI funds were provided, DOC spent a larger percentage of its CJI operating funds on education—in fiscal year 1984, 35 percent; in 1985, 58 percent; and in 1986, 100 percent. (See app. II.)
- DOC's current job placement information system significantly limits the ability of DOC managers to accurately assess program performance and make well-informed managerial decisions. Our analysis of DOC's computerized job placement records showed that the data were incomplete, not standardized, and inaccurate. For example, 45 percent of the records did not indicate whether the placement was related to the CJI training received. Further limiting program evaluation is the lack of information that could provide a complete profile of the job obtained and its relationship to the training received. There is no requirement for the placement

file to contain (1) job descriptions, (2) data on why a particular placement was deemed to be related to the CJI training received, or (3) information on noneducation factors that influenced an inmate to take a particular job. Until the existing data problems are corrected and the additional data elements added, we believe that a significant shortfall exists in DOC's job placement database, thereby reducing its usefulness to DOC management. (See app. III.)

- Our analysis of the limited data available shows that from October 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989, there have been 3,944 job placements. Of these, 392 (10 percent) were reported to be related to the CJI training received. The perceived low ratio of CJI placements is influenced by noneducation factors. These factors are (1) the practice of inmates taking the first available job in order to be eligible for parole; (2) the practice of inmates taking a non-CJI-related job because it provided better benefits, especially medical; and (3) the lack and/or cost of transportation, causing inmates to take a job close to their homes.

  Jobs under the title "Laborer" were obtained most frequently, representing 123 (31 percent) of the CJI-related placements. For the CJI-related group as a whole, the average hourly salary obtained was $5.90. (See app. III.)

- The chronic overcrowding that exists in the District's correctional system works against efforts to develop and sustain an effective education program. DOC estimates that the inmate population will exceed the physical plant population well into the 1990s and perhaps longer, depending on how quickly additional facilities are built. According to DOC officials, overcrowding results in inmate transfers that cause significant breaks in an inmate's education and creates an environment not conducive to learning. Inmates transferred to other state and local facilities are often those enrolled in the education program and picked by the receiving institution because their involvement in the program is considered a positive trait. (See app. III.)

Conclusion

District managers need reasonably complete, standardized, and accurate data regarding the CJI program in order to both make management decisions and evaluate program results. Our analysis of DOC's job placement records, however, showed that the data contained in those records were incomplete, not standardized, and inaccurate. These problems impede using this information for making well-informed management decisions to improve program effectiveness.

Recommendations

To improve the usefulness and validity of its computerized job placement data, we recommend that the Mayor of the District of Columbia instruct the Director of DOC to take the following actions:

- Review existing job placement input controls to determine how the accuracy of the data can be improved.
- Develop standardized job title information so that all similar job placements are grouped under the same job title.
- Provide in the computerized record, information relating to (1) job description, (2) why a particular placement was deemed to be related to the CJI training received, and (3) any noneducation factors that influenced an inmate to take a particular job.

Agency Comments

The District of Columbia Government concurred with the report's findings, conclusion, and recommendations, noting that many of these issues are not new. The District listed a variety of corrective actions that it will take to address our recommendations. In particular, the District will strengthen controls over the input of job placement data by placing data responsibilities in one person, having a quality assurance team review current controls for accuracy, and adding more equipment. In addition, the District will provide additional staff training and acquire new software to expand and improve its job placement database. The complete comments of the District are in appendix IV.

As arranged with your offices, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the issue date. At that time, we will send copies to other interested parties.

Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix V. If you have any questions concerning this report, please contact me on 275-8387.

J. William Gadsby
Director, Federal
Management Issues

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Abbreviations

CJI	Criminal Justice Initiative
DOC	Department of Corrections

What Program Planning Challenges Did the District Face in Originally Organizing the CJI Program?

In October 1983, Congress provided the District of Columbia's Department of Corrections (DOC) with $22.3 million in Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI) funds, of which $12.4 million was for operating expenses. CJI operating funds were to be used in part to implement a correctional education program that would be viewed as a model for the rest of the United States. However, the District's initial planning efforts were hampered by insufficient lead time for proper planning and Congress' desire for quick results. These conditions created formidable challenges for the District.

In response to the CJI challenge, DOC reorganized its education function by centralizing program management. The goal was to expedite and gain better control over CJI planning and implementation. However, communication problems emerged between the DOC security staff, facility managers, and the education staff. These problems resulted in slowing CJI education program implementation. DOC also hired a private contractor to perform a variety of administrative services, such as obtaining teachers and supplies for the program. DOC believed that the in-house procurement process was too slow. Again, the goal was to be responsive to the congressional call for quick action.

More Time Was Needed to Plan and Organize CJI

Before fiscal year 1984, DOC operated a relatively small education program. When it needed to expand its program quickly because of the CJI initiative, DOC took actions it thought would speed program implementation. However, the 3-month lead time provided by Congress was not enough for DOC to effectively plan and organize the program.

CJI Funding Was Too Much Too Soon

According to a former DOC Assistant Director for Administrative Services who was involved with the early CJI planning, DOC was first approached by a congressional representative during the summer of 1983 for an estimate of the funds needed to develop a basic literacy program for residents of the District's correctional institutions. DOC's initial CJI planning estimate was about $750,000. That estimate was later revised to $8 million, including $4.2 million in capital funds because DOC was informed by a congressional representative that Congress was considering a larger program.

In October 1983, or about 3 months from the time DOC was first contacted, $22.3 million was provided to DOC to improve and expand its education programs and to relieve the crowding that existed within the District's correctional facilities as part of the District's fiscal year 1984

appropriations act. According to the former Assistant Director for Administrative Services, DOC had developed only preliminary staffing and budget configurations by October 1983.

The appropriations act provided $22.3 million for CJI. According to the act's conference report, $9.9 million was for capital improvements and $12.4 million was for operating expenses. (We have previously reported on the use of CJI capital funds.[1]) The conference report also contained a breakdown of how the conferees intended the operating funds to be used. The operating expenses were broken down as follows: (1) $487,000 for classification and parole officers and records clerks; (2) $3.7 million for additional corrections officers; and (3) $8.2 million for education and vocational programs. However, because the operating expense breakdown was not incorporated into the act either expressly or by reference, the District was not legally bound to follow it. The $8.2 million represented about 600 percent more than the approximate $1.2 million DOC spent for education during fiscal year 1982.[2] DOC was required to spend the operating funds during fiscal year 1984 or lose them.

Congress Stressed Results

In addition to the funding challenges, the District was also being challenged by Congress to show program results quickly. At a November 1983 congressional CJI oversight hearing, CJI's principal congressional sponsor noted that if the program yielded results, appropriations for other jurisdictions could become available. He also noted that future DOC CJI appropriations would be influenced by program accomplishments. A congressional representative confirmed that pressure was placed on DOC to get the CJI program going. DOC officials said that quick results were desired because CJI was considered a pilot program that could be used as a national model.

[1]D.C. Government: Problems Have Created Delays in Constructing Education Facilities at Lorton, (GAO/GGD-88-1BR, Oct. 1987).

[2]Fiscal year 1982, rather than 1983, was used for comparison because 1983 data were not available. According to a DOC budget official, a reporting format change instituted in fiscal year 1983 discontinued recording expenditures at the program level of detail, i.e., education. The official said, however, that fiscal year 1983 expenditures for education were similar to those made during fiscal year 1982. Data prior to fiscal year 1982 were not available.

Centralizing the Education Program Caused Problems

To expedite CJI implementation, DOC changed its educational program management approach. DOC took program control away from the staffs of the individual correctional facilities and gave it to a centralized management staff. However, this action resulted in conflict and a lack of communication among the education, facility management, and security staffs, which actually hindered program implementation.

Before the CJI initiative, each correctional facility manager had been in charge of that facility's education program—a decentralized management approach. On November 27, 1983, all institutionally based academic and vocational programs were reorganized into a single program under the new position of Assistant Director for Educational Services. The Assistant Director became responsible for and had control over all personnel, expenditures, and services provided under the education portion of the CJI appropriation. The Assistant Director also assumed control over existing educational programs, including personnel, equipment, supplies, and space.

This new organization encountered substantial communication problems. It did not effectively address the different priorities of the DOC staffs, according to a former DOC Director. While the Education Services staff's primary interest was the establishment of an education program, the corrections staff's priority was facility and personnel security. According to DOC officials, the corrections staff's input in the planning and implementation of the program was not obtained. According to the former DOC Director, the lack of communication resulted in a "we-versus-them attitude" and "no buy in" from security personnel and facility administrators. He said that as a result, the education function never became integrated into the mainstream of the correctional environment, and implementation was hampered.

In August 1987, DOC decentralized management of the education program, and facility administrators were once again responsible for the education program within their facilities. This was done in response to congressional concern that DOC facility administrators should become more involved in the daily operation of the education program.

Currently, the education division's responsibility is the development and monitoring of the program, with day-to-day program implementation and supervision done by the facility administrators. The DOC officials currently responsible for education and management of the facilities believe that facility administrators have to be involved with the program and that this was a positive change.

Use of Contractor in Lieu of Normal Procurement Channels

In addition to centralizing management of the education function, DOC used a private contractor to expedite program implementation. This contractor became the procurement agency for CJI needs from December 1983 until contract termination in April 1986. During this period, the contractor assisted in program development, implementation, and monitoring; hired and paid CJI staff; provided travel services; hired consultants; and purchased supplies and equipment. The contractor paid the cost of the services rendered and was then reimbursed by DOC for the direct cost of the service provided plus 30 percent to cover the contractor's overhead and profit.

According to DOC officials, DOC used a contractor rather than the District's normal procurement channels to obtain services because of the mandate to implement CJI quickly. DOC CJI officials considered the normal procurement channels too time-consuming for quick implementation. Because of the amount of time that has passed and the lack of available data, we were not able to determine to what extent the alleged slowness on the part of the District's procurement and personnel functions existed. However, within about 2 months of beginning to assist DOC (February-March 1984), the contractor was purchasing supplies and equipment for DOC and paying the salaries of 62 CJI staff members. The contractor would pay all costs, including salaries, and would then be reimbursed by DOC for its expenditures plus 30 percent. The 30 percent extra represented the contractor's overhead (22 percent) and profit (8 percent). About $3.2 million, or 22 percent, of the $14.3 million in federal CJI operating funds DOC spent for education was paid to this contractor.

The contract was terminated during April 1986 because the then DOC assistant director responsible for education believed that the funds used to support the contractor's overhead and profit could be better used within DOC to support the education effort. She said that DOC needed these funds because federal CJI funding was significantly reduced for fiscal year 1986.

Lessons Learned: Future Efforts Need More Time and Greater Emphasis on Planning

District officials readily admit that program delays did occur. As recently as May 17, 1989, the Mayor testified before the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, Senate Appropriations Committee, that implementation was slower than expected and was not without problems. The Mayor stated that "the bureaucracy operates slowly and it took some time to get all aspects of the program in gear."

The CJI experience provides valuable insight on the problems associated with implementing a new and large initiative without adequate planning. DOC program officials said that the lack of planning time and the need to show quick results were key factors contributing to the problems that later resulted. They said that at least 1 year would be necessary to plan a program of the size and scope of CJI. During this year, they said, the program planners should do the following:

- determine the needs of the target population;
- develop a comprehensive education program and curriculum to meet the needs of the population;
- develop an effective system for the procurement of teachers, supplies, and facilities; and
- establish an effective process to facilitate systemwide coordination, cooperation, and direction among all the parties that will affect the success of the program. These parties include not only government agencies but also private organizations associated with correctional rehabilitation and business groups that will eventually provide jobs.

For What Purpose Were CJI Operating Funds Spent?

During fiscal years 1984 through 1986, Congress provided DOC with $27.3 million in federal funds for CJI operating expenses. Of this total, DOC used $14.3 million (52 percent) for the education portion of CJI. The remaining $13 million (48 percent) was used for security purposes, such as the hiring of correctional officers, and for other purposes such as feeding, clothing, and providing medical services to inmates.

Each fiscal year, DOC increased the percentage of CJI operating funds used for education. During fiscal year 1984, 35 percent was used for education; during fiscal year 1985, 58 percent; and during fiscal year 1986, 100 percent. Starting in fiscal year 1987, the District used its own funds to continue this education effort.

CJI Operating Fund Expenditures for Fiscal Years 1984 Through 1986

During fiscal years 1984 through 1986, Congress provided DOC with a total of $27.3 million in federal operating funds for CJI. Of this total, DOC used $14.3 million (52 percent) for the education portion of CJI. The remaining $13 million (48 percent) was used for security and other needs. The District also contributed $2.3 million of its own funds during fiscal year 1986 to support the education program. Table II.1 summarizes CJI expenditures for the 3 fiscal years. The expenditure classifications were determined by DOC.

Table II.1: Expenditure of CJI Operating Funds, Fiscal Years 1984, 1985, and 1986

Dollars in thousands

Description	Education	Security and other[a]	Total
Personal services	$8,305	$10,315	**$18,620**
Supplies	1,525	687	**2,212**
Other services and charges[b]	3,971	1,641	**5,611**
Medical	0	16	**16**
Land and buildings	887	0	**887**
Equipment	1,857	334	**2,191**
Subtotal	**16,545[c]**	**12,992**	**29,537**
Less District FY 1986 contribution	(2,286)	0	**(2,286)**
Total federal funds	**$14,259**	**$12,992**	**$27,251**
Percentage	52	48	**100**

Note: Totals do not add due to rounding.

[a]Expenses classified as "other" include feeding, clothing, and providing medical services to inmates.

[b]"Other services and charges" is primarily used for contractual services such as consulting.

[c]Includes $2.3 million of District funds provided during fiscal year 1986.

DOC Spent 35 Percent of Its 1984 CJI Operating Funds on Education

The District of Columbia Appropriations Act of 1984, (Public Law 98-125) provided about $25.2 million to the District for CJI. Of this amount, $22.3 million was provided to DOC. The remaining $2.9 million was provided to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for additional staff and capital improvements. Of the $22.3 million provided to DOC, $12.4 million was used for CJI operating expenses and the remaining $9.9 million was used for capital projects.

For fiscal year 1984, DOC reported it spent $4.3 million for education and $8.1 million for security and other purposes. Table II.2 presents a summary of fiscal year 1984 CJI operating fund expenditures.

Table II.2: Expenditure of CJI Operating Funds, Fiscal Year 1984

Dollars in thousands

Description	Education	Security and other	Total*
Personal services	$844	$5,819	**$6,663**
Supplies	849	583	**1,432**
Other services and charges	957	1,524	**2,481**
Medical services	0	16	**16**
Land and buildings	887	0	**887**
Equipment	781	169	**950**
Total	**$4,318**	**$8,112**	**$12,430**
Percentage	35	65	**100**

*Total does not add due to rounding.

DOC Spent 58 Percent of Its 1985 CJI Operating Funds on Education

For fiscal year 1985, Congress provided DOC $11.6 million for the continuation of CJI. Because of congressional concern regarding the pace with which the education portion of CJI was being implemented, only about one-half of that $11.6 million ($6.2 million) was provided as part of the District's 1985 appropriation (Public Law 98-473). The additional $5.4 million was later provided in a supplemental appropriation (Public Law 99-88). During fiscal year 1985, DOC used $6.7 million, or 58 percent, of the total CJI appropriation for educational purposes. The remaining $4.9 million, or 42 percent, was used for security and other proposes, such as bedding supplies.

As with fiscal year 1984, Congress did not specify in the public law the purposes for which the fiscal year 1985 CJI funds could be used. Table II.3 presents a summary of fiscal year 1985 CJI expenditures.

Table II.3: Expenditure of CJI Operating Funds, Fiscal Year 1985

Dollars in thousands

Description	Education	Security and other	Total[a]
Personal services	$3,590	$4,496	**$8,086**
Supplies	434	104	**538**
Other services and charges	1,896	116	**2,012**
Equipment	816	165	**981**
Total	**$6,736**	**$4,881**	**$11,618**
Percentage	**58**	**42**	**100**

[a]Total does not add due to rounding.

All Fiscal Year 1986 CJI Operating Funds Spent on Education

During fiscal year 1986, the last year federal funds were provided, Congress provided $3.2 million in CJI operating funds. The District supplemented this with $2.3 million of its own funds. Table II.4 shows expenditure data for the combined federal and District fiscal year 1986 education funds. The District did not separately account for federal funds.

Table II.4: Expenditure of CJI Operating Funds, Fiscal Year 1986

Dollars in thousands

Description	Education	Security and other	Total
Personal services	$3,871	0	**$3,871**
Supplies	242	0	**242**
Other services and charges	1,118	0	**1,118**
Equipment	260	0	**260**
Total	**$5,492[a]**	**0**	**$5,492**
Percentage	100	0	**100**

Note: Totals do not add due to rounding.

[a]Included $2.3 million in nonfederal funds.

District Now Supports Education Programs

Beginning with fiscal year 1987, the District has used its own funds to support the continuation of the education programs begun under CJI. Since fiscal year 1987, the District has spent $24.4 million on correctional education—$7.7 million in 1987, $8.5 million in 1988, and $8.2 million in 1989.

How Many Inmates Obtained a Job Related to the CJI Training Received?

Since fiscal year 1987, DOC has used a computerized job placement database to retain information relating to the jobs its inmates have received. During our analysis of these data, we noted several significant accuracy problems, including missing information. Consequently, while the data presented in this appendix represent the best available on the results of the CJI program, they have significant limitations that restrict our ability to draw conclusions about the impact of CJI.

Our limited analysis showed that from October 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989, there have been 3,944 job placements. Of these, 392, or 10 percent, were identified on DOC records as being related to the CJI training received. Jobs under the title "Laborer" were identified as the most frequently obtained, representing 123, or 31 percent, of the CJI-related placements. For the CJI-related group, the average hourly salary obtained was $5.90.

According to DOC officials, the perceived low number of reported CJI-related placements is attributable to several noneducation factors. These factors are (1) the practice of inmates taking the first available job in order to be eligible for parole; (2) the practice of inmates taking a non-CJI-related job because it provided better benefits, especially medical; and (3) the lack and/or cost of transportation, causing inmates to take jobs close to their homes.

The chronic overcrowding that exists in the District's correctional system, a problem that goes well beyond the education program, presents a significant challenge to providing effective education. DOC estimated that at the end of fiscal year 1989, the inmate population exceeded capacity by 23 percent. According to DOC officials, overcrowding results in inmate transfers that cause breaks in an inmate's education and creates an environment that is not conducive to learning.

Data Errors in DOC's Job Placement File

During our job placement records analysis, we became aware of significant data accuracy problems in DOC's computerized placement records. These problems were as follows:

- Incomplete data on CJI-related placements. Our initial analysis of DOC placement records showed that 45 percent did not indicate whether the placement was related to the CJI training the inmate had received. To deal with this deficiency, the DOC Coordinator of Job Placement and Arts in Prison Program reviewed the computerized records and decided whether the job placement was related to the training received.

- Inconsistent data on CJI participation. Analysis of the records after the job placement coordinator had completed her review showed there were 427 CJI-related placements. However, analysis of the CJI-related placements showed that for 35 of these (8 percent), the inmate who obtained the job did not participate in any education program. These 35 records were not included in our CJI-related placement analysis but were included in the non-CJI analysis.
- Inaccurate/Incomplete data on salaries. In analyzing hourly salary data, we noted that some records showed weekly rather than hourly salary data, showed no salary data, or showed what appeared to be unreasonable data (e.g., 50 cents per hour). Because of these problems, we included only job placement records that showed hourly salaries of between $3 and $20. This methodology was agreed to by the DOC job placement coordinator. As a consequence, 198 (5 percent) of the total 3,944 placement records were not included in our salary analysis.
- Incomplete job title information. While analyzing job titles, we noted that 319, (1 CJI-related and 318 non-CJI-related) or 8 percent, of the placements did not contain a job title. Also, DOC does not maintain any job description data in its computerized records. Thus, we could not determine why a particular job was identified as CJI-related.
- No standard job titles. DOC does not use standardized job titles. It records the job title as it is provided by the employer. This practice and the lack of job description data precluded any meaningful analysis of the types of jobs obtained. For example, the following jobs associated with sheet metal work were reported: sheet metal, sheet metal approx., sheet metal work, and sheet metal mech. These four titles could represent the same, similar, or different jobs within the same trade.

District managers need reasonably complete, standardized, and accurate data to make management decisions and evaluate program results. However, our analysis of DOC's job placement records showed that the data contained in those records were incomplete (for CJI participation, salaries, and job titles), not standardized (for job titles), and inaccurate (for CJI participation and salaries). Standardization of job titles would allow DOC to more accurately determine what type of jobs its inmates are obtaining.

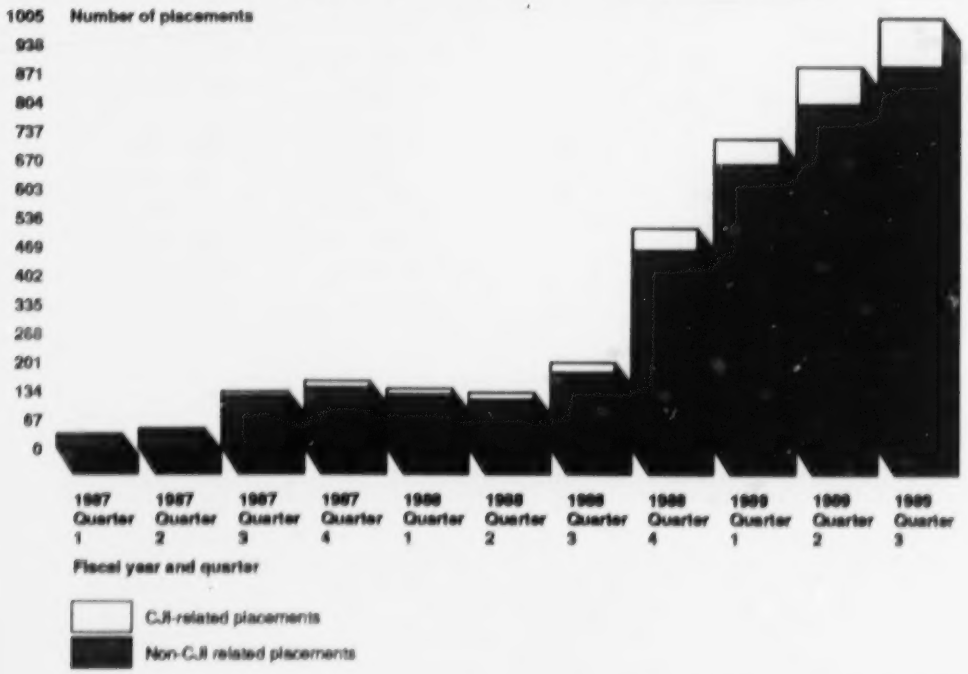
Further limiting DOC managers' abilities to evaluate program results and effectiveness is the lack of information in the placement records that could provide a complete profile of the job obtained and its relationship to the training received. This necessary information includes (1) job descriptive data, (2) why a particular placement was deemed to be related to the CJI training received, and (3) any noneducation factors

that influenced an inmate to take a particular job. Until the existing data problems are corrected and the additional data elements added, we believe that a significant shortfall exists in DOC's job placement database, reducing its usefulness to DOC management.

CJI-Related Placements Represent 10 Percent of Total Placements

On the basis of the limited data available, for the time period October 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989, our analysis showed there were 3,944 job placements. Of these, 392, or 10 percent, were identified as being related to the CJI training the inmate received. We found no appreciable increase in the ratio of CJI-related placements to total placements during the time period we analyzed. Figure III.1 shows the number of placements by fiscal quarter.

Figure III.1: Job Placements by Fiscal Quarter, October 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989



Note 1: There were a total of 3,944 placements of which 392 were CJI-related placements.

Note 2: Ten percent of all placements from October 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989, were CJI-related.

While the CJI-related placements represent 10 percent of the total placements, it should be noted that many of the inmates who obtained non-CJI-related placements were participants in a CJI education program. Of the 3,552 non-CJI placements, 1,868, or 53 percent, showed that the inmates who obtained those placements were enrolled in a CJI education program. For those inmates, a DOC vocational development specialist decided that the job obtained did not relate to the CJI training.

DOC officials said the perceived low number of CJI-related placements is influenced by several noneducation factors. One factor is that inmates are taking the first available job, whether or not it relates to the CJI training, in order to be eligible for parole. The D.C. Board of Parole requires an inmate to have employment in order to be paroled. According to an official of the Board, while it does not keep statistics relating to this subject, it does appear that inmates are taking the first available job in order to be eligible for parole.

A second factor noted was that a vocational development specialist may recommend that an inmate take a non-CJI-related job rather than a CJI-related job, if the specialist believes the former would be better for the inmate and/or the inmate's family. For example, DOC considers jobs with medical benefits to be very desirable, especially if the inmate's family has no medical coverage or is receiving its medical coverage as a result of welfare participation. If the non-CJI job offers medical benefits while the CJI-related job does not, the specialist would probably recommend the non-CJI-related job. The final decision, however, is the inmate's.

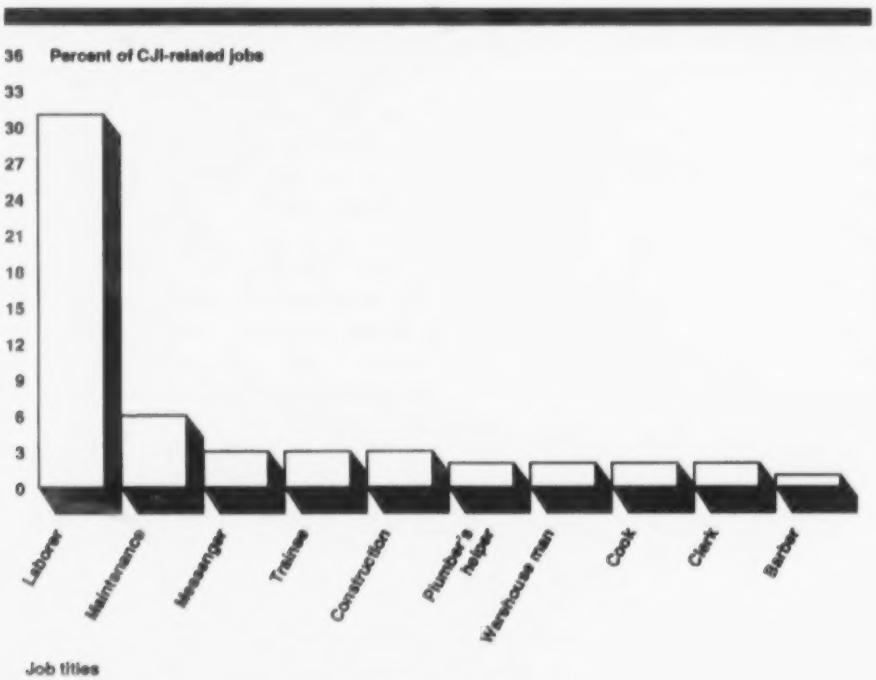
The availability and cost of transportation were also noted as factors affecting job selection. The DOC job placement coordinator noted that because of transportation limitations, some inmates prefer a job close to their homes regardless of the job's relationship to the training they received.

Most Common Job Obtained—Laborer

Our initial analysis of job titles showed there were 754 separate job titles reported in DOC records. However, DOC does not use standard job titles but instead reports the title provided by the employer. In order to adequately report on the type of job obtained, we grouped all the jobs that appeared similar under separate titles. For example, under our title "Warehouseman" we included the following job titles reported in the computerized records—warehouse, warehousemen, warehouseman, warehouse person, and warehouse worker. Our effort resulted in reducing the number of separate titles from 754 to 534.

The job title with the greatest number of placements was "Laborer." That title accounted for 1,273, or 35 percent, of all the placements that had job titles. Regarding CJI training-related placements, the "Laborer" title accounted for 123 placements, or 31 percent. For non-CJI-related placements, it represented 1,150 placements, or 36 percent. Figures III.2 and III.3 show the 10 job titles with the highest number of placements for CJI-related placements as well as non-CJI-related placements.

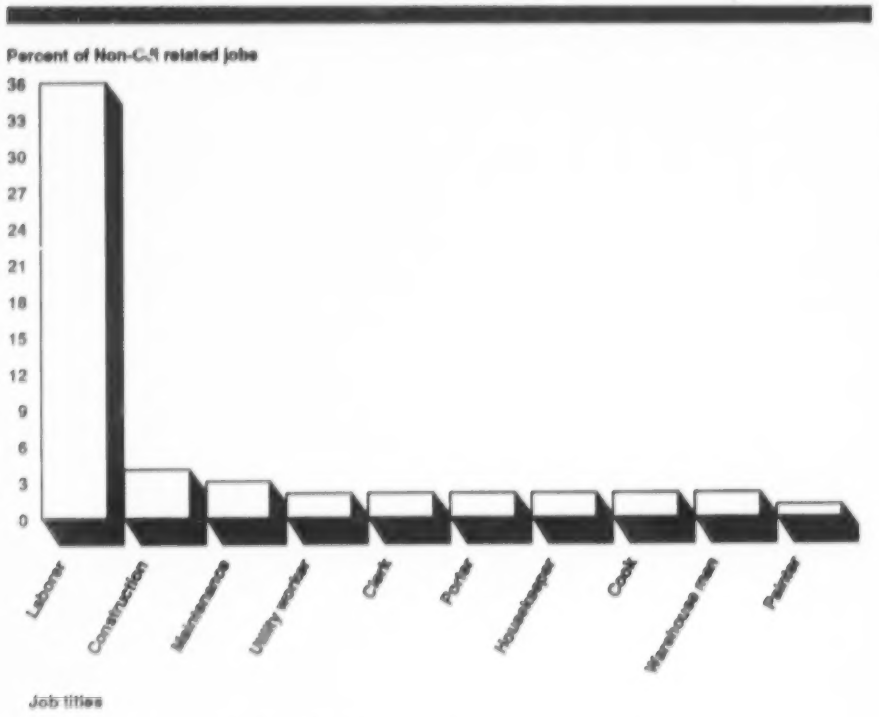
Figure III.2: Most Frequently Obtained Job for Inmates With CJI-Related Training, October 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989



Note 1: Based on 391 CJI-related placements that had job titles.

Note 2: All remaining job titles each represented 1 percent or less of the total CJI-related placements.

Figure III.3: Most Frequently Obtained Job for Inmates Without CJI-Related Training, October 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989



Note 1: Percentages are based on a total of 3552 job placements that had job titles.

Note 2: All remaining job titles each represented 1 percent or less of the total job placements.

According to DOC officials, while they can locate a job for any inmate who wants one, the typical jobs available are for unskilled laborers and have little upward mobility. They attribute this to (1) the bias associated with hiring ex-convicts, (2) the high level of competition for all jobs due to the above average level of education of the local population, and (3) inmates wanting jobs close to home because of transportation availability and cost.

Salaries Average Less Than $6.00 Per Hour

The average salary received for jobs during the period October 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989, was $5.80 per hour. For CJI-training-related jobs it was $5.90, and for non-CJI-related jobs it was $5.79. There was no appreciable salary increase for either group during the time period analyzed. Table III.4 shows average salary received, by fiscal year.

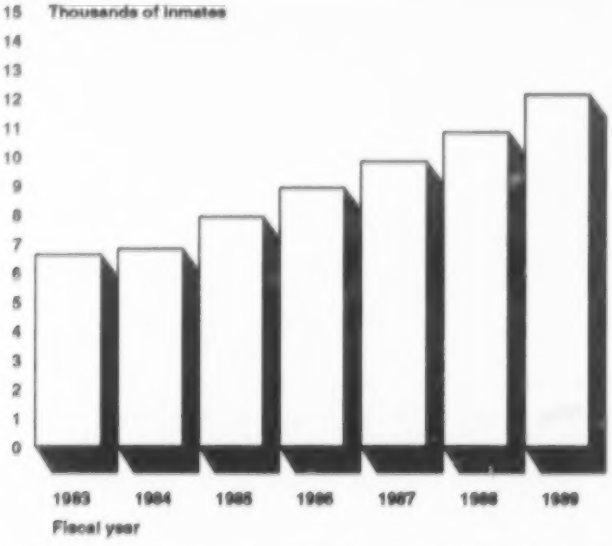
Table III.1: Average Hourly Salary, Fiscal Years 1987 Through 1989

Fiscal year	CJI- related jobs	Non-CJI- related jobs
1987	$5.88	$5.72
1988	5.88	5.84
1989	5.91	5.78
Average	$5.90	$5.79
Average for all placements	$5.80	

Prison Crowding—A Significant Problem Facing the Education Program

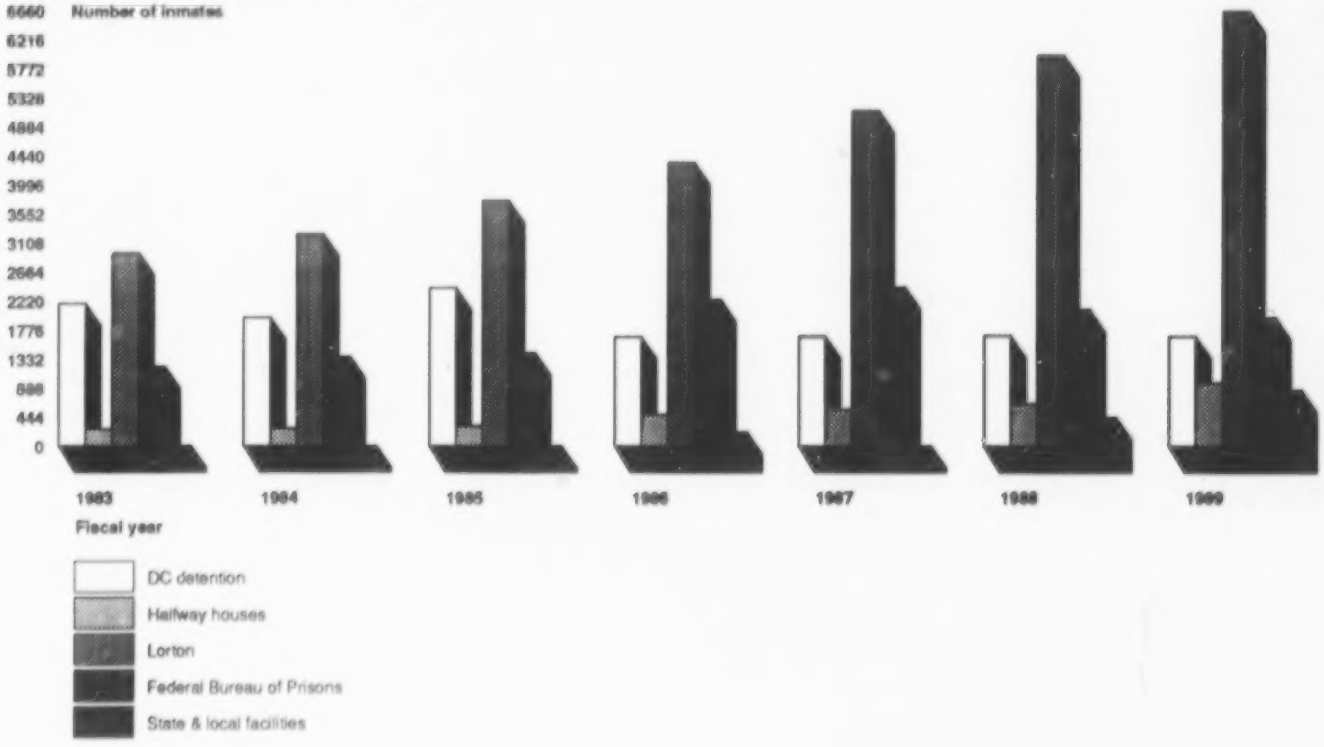
Since fiscal year 1983, DOC's inmate population has grown by 84 percent. Figures III.5 and III.6 show the locations at which inmates are housed and the population change at these locations between fiscal years 1983 and 1989.

Figure III.4: Inmate Year-End Population by Fiscal Year, 1983 Through 1989



Note: The inmate population increased by 84 percent during the time period covered by this figure.

Figure III.5: Inmate Year-End Population by Facility, Fiscal Years 1983 Through 1989



While the number of inmates has increased, the District's physical plant capacity has not kept pace. On the basis of DOC's fiscal year-end 1989 population level, DOC estimated that the inmate population exceeded the physical plant population capacity by 23 percent. DOC projects that the inmate population will exceed capacity until at least fiscal year 1992.

DOC officials claim that chronic crowding has made it difficult to ensure continuity in education programs. To avoid violation of court orders regarding population limits, DOC must move inmates from one District facility to another or to another jurisdiction's correctional facility. These transfers result in breaks in inmate education programs. For example, an inmate transferred to another jurisdiction may not have any education opportunity if none is offered by the receiving institution. According to the former DOC Director, many of the transferred inmates

were enrolled in the DOC education program. These inmates are prime candidates for selection for transfer because their involvement in education is considered a positive behavioral factor, and thus they are more acceptable to the receiving jurisdiction.

Overcrowding also presents a negative environment for education, according to the DOC Deputy Director for Operations. For example, space may not be available to provide the opportunity for quality time for students to study. He said that it is very difficult for inmates to effectively study in a noisy, overcrowded area where they are concerned about their physical safety.

Comments of the District of Columbia Government

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
EXECUTIVE OFFICE

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR
DEPUTY MAYOR FOR OPERATIONS

CAROL B. THOMPSON
CITY ADMINISTRATOR
DEPUTY MAYOR FOR OPERATIONS
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVE., N.W. - RM. 507
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

MAY 17 1990

Richard L. Fogel
Assistant Comptroller General
U.S. General Accounting Office
441 G Street, N.W. Room 3860
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Fogel:

In reply to your letter dated April 2, 1990, please find enclosed the comments of the District government to your draft report titled, "Non-Education Factors Hindered Criminal Justice Initiative". Please direct further inquiries regarding this matter to Marc Loud of my staff at, 727-6053.

Sincerely,

for Robert Tobman

Carol B. Thompson
City Administrator/Deputy Mayor
for Operations

Enclosure

Government of the District of Columbia
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
Suite N-203
1923 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Office of the Director

MAY 16 1990

MEMORANDUM

TO : Carol B. Thompson
City Administrator/Deputy Mayor
for Operations

FROM : Walter B. Ridley
Director

SUBJECT: Response to GAO Audit titled "Non-Education Factors Hindered Criminal Justice Initiative"

The assessment of this agency is that the conclusions drawn in this report, as they relate to the education program, have been generally accepted all along and are not new.

During the past several years we have developed new procedures, with the result that the procurement process has been improved, and through the decentralization of day-to-day management of educational programs, we believe communication among security staff, facility managers and the education staff is more open and productive.

In regards to the job placement function, we are cognizant of the concerns as outlined, and have already begun to initiate new procedures. I will briefly discuss each GAO recommendation:

- **Review existing job placement input controls to determine how the accuracy of the data can be improved.**

  1. We have identified one person to input all job placement data into the system submitted from halfway houses. The error rate has already been reduced, as have incomplete/inaccurate data.

  2. Additional WICAT computers are in place to facilitate the input process.

  3. We have also identified a quality assurance team to review current controls for accuracy and to make further recommendations for improvement.

- **Develop standardized job title information so that all similar job placements are grouped under the same job title.**

  1. The department has ordered the GIS (Guidance Information System) software which will standardize our job title information for us.

  2. Three staff members have already been trained by the Department of Employment Services on the use of this software.

  3. A target date of September 1, 1990 has been identified to have all staff trained and using the GIS software.

- **Provide in the computerized record, information relating to (1) job description, (2) why a particular placement was deemed to be related to the CJI training received, and (3) any non-education factors that influenced an inmate to take a particular job.**

  1. We are also purchasing the software related to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, which lists conventional job descriptions. The Department of Employment Services is providing us technical assistance to put this in place.

  2. The quality assurance team has also been asked to develop a procedure for documenting factors that relate to job placement. They have been given a deadline of September 1, 1990 for this project.

As those areas that we have identified for further development are completed, I will keep you informed.

Major Contributors to This Report

General Government Division, Washington, D.C.	John Stahl, Assistant Director, Federal Management Issues John A. Parulis, Evaluator-in-Charge Gregory Wilmoth, Senior Social Science Analyst Marsha A. Matthews, Secretary